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Multivariate Analysis of the Relationship of Psychosocial Crisis Variables to Ego Identity Status[1]

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The purpose of the present study was the investigation of the intercorrelations among psychosocial crisis resolution variables and ego identity statuses. The focus of the study was correlational including discriminant analyses which allowed for the identification of psychosocial crisis predictor variables which significantly distinguished identity statuses. Discriminant analyses were also computed for the purpose of identifying variables which significantly distinguished male and female identity statuses. Eighty-eight university students drawn from a variety of on-campus populations were each administered Marcia's Ego Identity Status Interview and completed Rasmussen's Ego Identity Scale. Review of the findings appeared to support Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. The evidence presented also demonstrated additional convergent and discriminant validity of Marcia's ego identity status concept. The results assisted in distinguishing male and female identity statuses. The findings tended to indicate that coping with the identity crisis (e.g., identity status) involves different psychosocial components.

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INTRODUCTION

Erikson's theory (1956, 1959, 1963, 1968) proposes that the human life cycle involves eight stages in the development of the ego. These hypothesized stages "develop according to steps predetermined in the human organism's readiness to be driven toward, to be aware of, and to interact with a widening radius of significant individuals and institutions" (Erikson, 1968, p. 93). This is known as the epigenetic principle of growth: "Somewhat generalized, this principle states that anything that grows has a ground plan, and that out of this ground plan the parts arise, each part having its time of special ascendency, until all the parts have arisen to form a functioning whole" (Erikson, 1968, p. 92).

The principal conflict of adolescence as described in Erikson's theory (1968) involves the resolution of seven "part conflicts." Each reflects one of the four primary conflicts of childhood or one of the three crises of adulthood. A concrete sense of identity necessitates the successful resolution of all seven. It characterizes the adolescent identity crisis in relationship to all the other normative crises of the developmental life cycle. In this manner the individual can come to terms with his past and sufficiently prepare himself for the future (Gallatin, 1975).

> The sequence of stages thus represents a successive development of the component parts of the psychosocial personality. Each part exists in some form (verticals) before the time when it becomes "phase-specific;" i.e., when "its" psychosocial crisis is precipitated both by the individual's readiness and by society's pressure. But each component comes to ascendence and finds its more or less lasting solution at the conclusion of "its" stage. It is thus *systematically related* to all the others, and all depend on the proper development at the proper *time* of each; although individual make-up and the nature of society determine the rate of development of each of them, and thus the *rate* of all of them. It is at the end of adolescence, then, that identity becomes phase-specific (V, 5), i.e., must find a certain integration as a relatively conflict-free psychosocial arrangement – or remain defective or conflict-laden (Erikson, 1956, p. 76).

It seems quite clear that what happens during adolescence is in many respects determined by what went before. Furthermore adolescence appears to determine much of what will follow. The identity crisis incorporates aspects of all the other nuclear conflicts. In short, identity formation comprises a very complex set of relationships among the diverse states of the human development cycle.

The usefulness of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development has been widely acknowledged. However the question arises whether such a subjective, clinically derived theory is amenable to reliable objective measure and formal validation. Several empirical studies have been conducted attempting to verify the Eriksonian theory operationally.

Research evidence to date is highly suggestive that such a conceptual frame is accountable to reliable objective measure and documentation. Although many of these studies, according to Bauer (1972), have adopted a rather limited

view of Erikson's theory, the works of other researchers have encompassed the multidimensionality of the theoretical constructs involved.

The work of Marcia (1964, 1966) provides construct validation for measures of overall ego identity. He also hypothesized patterns of "identity statuses," which are adaptive modes of reacting to the late adolescence identity crisis. Marcia developed a semi-structured interview which employed measures and criteria congruent with Erikson's formulation of the identity crisis as a psychosocial task.

Concentrating on the presence of crisis and commitment in the areas of occupation and ideology, Marcia (1966) proposed that late adolescents can be assigned to one of four identity statuses. The term "crisis" is used to refer to a period of struggle or active questioning in arriving at a set of beliefs and a decision regarding occupational plans and belief systems. Commitment is defined as a firm, unwavering decision regarding occupational plans and belief systems.

The individual with "identity achievement" has chosen an occupation and ideology (religious and political) from among several previously considered (experienced crisis) possibilities. He has re-evaluated and resolved his past beliefs in a manner that leaves him free to act. "Identity diffusion" is identified by lack of commitment, regardless of whether or not a crisis period has occurred. The individual with identity diffusion is undecided and unconcerned about an occupation and uninterested or undiscriminating with respect to ideological matters.

The other two identity statuses formulated by Marcia (1966), "moratorium" and " foreclosure," are intermediary between achievement and diffusion. The moratorium is defined by an ongoing crisis period in which the individual is actively struggling to make commitments. However, he has not yet achieved a clear and satisfying self-definition. Foreclosure has occurred when the individual, without having experienced any overt crisis, already has specified commitments.

There exists a substantial amount of data in the literature regarding the discriminative and predictive correlates of these four identity statuses (Bob, 1969; Donovan, 1975a, 1975b; Marcia and Friedman, 1970; Orlofsky *et al.*, 1973; Podd *et al.*, 1970; Schenkel and Marcia, 1972; Toder and Marcia, 1973; C. K. Waterman and Waterman, 1974, 1975). However, only a few studies have been conducted in which the specific nature of psychosocial differences has been investigated.

Initially, Rasmussen (1964) attempted to operationally define and systematically measure the bipolar resolution of Erikson's first six stages of development. The results suggested a relationship between the basic trust/mistrust crisis and ego diffusion. Additional studies have been conducted since then which further substantiate the expected relationship between ego identity status and the personality components that Erikson implies are important preconditions for the establishment of an identity (Constantinople, 1969; Cribin, 1966).

C. K. Waterman *et al.* (1970) found significant correlates between identity and basic trust, autonomy, initiative, and industry. A. S. Waterman and Water-

man (1971), conducting a related study, found that for any given population the traits most likely to correlate with changes in status will be those for which significant differences among the various identity statuses exist. Identification of specific antecedent conditions (e.g., resolution of previous crises) associated with status changes allows for the possibility of systematic prediction of such changes. In a follow-up study, A. S. Waterman *et al.* (1974) found significant increases in the frequency of students in the identity achiever status from the freshman to the senior year at college. The achievement status was found to be the most stable, while the moratorium status was the least stable longitudinally. A. S. Waterman (1972), using the Constantinople (1969) questionnaire, obtained zero-order correlations that revealed successful psychosocial development to be related to high expectations to college. This latter trait may be suggestive of a greater degree of psychosocial maturity. Stepwise multiple regression analyses indicated that the personality components accounted for up to one-third of the variance in expectation scores. Identity, intimacy, and autonomy made the greatest independent contributions to the relationships, similar to earlier studies by A. S. Waterman and C. K. Waterman. The results of their studies tend to support the Eriksonian postulate that successful coping with the identity crisis is related to positive resolutions of previous stages.

The results of Kinsler (1972) and Orlofsky *et al.* (1973) studying ego identity status and the intimacy versus isolation crisis were interpreted as supporting the hypothesis that favorable resolution of the intimacy versus isolation crisis is related to successful resolution of the identity crisis. Donovan (1970) found that identity foreclosure subjects had difficulty in the area of restricted initiative (strict superego fuctioning). Identity diffusion subjects had little trust in themselves or the world and were the most emotionally disturbed of any status. Moratoriums were the most creative, insightful, and the most active interpersonally. Yet they had difficulty in making commitments to other people and to specific tasks and occupations. Identity achievement subjects were calmer, older people who had resolved most of their conflicts over authority and intimacy.

Such empirical studies would appear to offer substantial evidence of the likelihood of the relationship between resolution of the identity crisis and outcomes of previous psychosocial crises. Such a relationship is firmly based within Erikson's epigenetic principle of psychosocial development. The present study therefore was designed to expand upon these previous investigations in order to furnish additional supportive evidence of this developmental principle and theory.

Bearing in mind the objectives of the study, the following major hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 1: Ego identity statuses cannot significantly be distinguished from each other on the basis of psychosocial crisis resolution variables.

Hypothesis 2: Male and female ego identity statuses cannot be significantly distinguished from each other on the basis of psychosocial crisis resolution variables.

METHOD

Subjects for this study were volunteers from various on-campus populations during the 1975 spring semester at The University of Virginia. A heterogeneous sample of students from diverse areas of major study was obtained. The author made brief verbal presentation highlighting the research requirements of prospective subjects. A total of 88 subjects was obtained which adequately filled four ego identity statuses for statistical analyses. The age of students (mean = 20.56 years) was assumed to be representative of the latter portion of the adolescent period of development. It was therefore expected that these individuals would manifest discernible attitudinal and behavioral patterns associated with the ego identity crisis.

Ego identity status was determined by means of a semi-structured interview developed by Marcia (1964) and the new sexual questions discussed in the Marcia and Friedman (1970) study. The interview judges were familiar with the descriptions of the statuses provided in the *Scoring Manual* and classified each interview into that pattern which it most closely resembled. Interjudge reliability established in previous studies (Bob, 1969; Marcia, 1964, 1966, 1967; Marcia and Friedman, 1970; Orlofsky *et al.*, 1973; Podd *et al.*, 1970; Schenkel, 1975; Schenkel and Marcia, 1972; Toder and Marcia, 1973; A. S. Waterman *et al.*, 1974; and C. K. Waterman and Waterman, 1974, 1975) has ranged from 63%-85%. In this study interjudge reliability was based upon the number of interviews that the two judges agreed upon, relative to the total number of interviews judged. In the case of male subjects, the occupational status was weighted more heavily in determining the overall ego identity rating. In the case of female subjects, the religion and sex attitude statuses were more heavily weighted in determining the overall ego identity status. This procedure appeared to be congruent with the findings of C. K. Waterman *et al.* (1970) and Schenkel and Marcia (1972), which indicated these areas to be most predictive across the respective sexes. Interjudge reliability for all 88 subjects yielded a coefficient of 83.3%. No subjects had to be discarded because of inability to categorize them within statuses.

Resolution of previous psychosocial crises was determined by Rasmussen's Ego Identity Scale (1964). This instrument was derived from Erikson's theory as a method of investigating Erikson's concept of ego identity. It consists of multidimensional aspects of Erikson's construct and reflects the progressive increase in identity formation in terms of utilizing earlier developmental stages.

The scale was developed to provide a means of evaluating the adequacy with which subjects had resolved various psychosocial conflicts. The reliability of the final form of the scale on two samples of subjects, resulted in correlation coefficients of 0.849 and 0.851 (Rasmussen, 1964).

Subjects were administered the Ego Identity Status Interview by trained interviewers, consisting of graduate research assistants and the author. Each subject, upon completion of the interview, was given the Ego Identity Scale in a different room and scored in accordance with its respective manual. Multiple discriminant analyses were employed in order to distinguish the *a priori* defined groups (ego identity statuses) from one another on the basis of the subjects' scores on psychosocial crisis variables (Nie *et al.*, 1970; Nunnally, 1967). In this study the six correlated dependent variables were reduced to a single weighted composite score called a discriminant function. The discriminant function was the single weighted combination of measurements that maximized variance between groups relative to the variance within groups. This allowed for the identification of the psychosocial crisis predictor variables that significantly distinguished identity status subjects (Overall and Klett, 1972).

RESULTS

The means and standard deviations for the four identity statuses for the six variables are presented in Table I. With respect to Hypothesis 1, the discri-

Table I. Means and Standard Deviations for the Identified Identity Statuses on the Six Variables

	Achievement (N = 37)	Moratorium (N = 21)	Foreclosure (N = 15)	Diffusion (N = 15)	Total (N = 88)
Means					
Var. 1 (Trust)	9.38	10.10	9.27	8.87	9.44
Var. 2 (Autonomy)	9.86	10.10	9.07	8.07	9.48
Var. 3 (Initiative)	9.30	9.00	9.87	8.93	9.26
Var. 4 (Industry)	8.46	8.90	10.00	7.53	8.67
Var. 5 (Identity)	8.97	9.10	8.53	7.93	8.75
Var. 6 (Intimacy)	9.62	9.86	9.20	8.53	9.42
Standard deviations					
Var. 1 (Trust)	2.23	1.18	1.44	1.77	1.84
Var. 2 (Autonomy)	1.92	1.14	1.39	1.58	1.75
Var. 3 (Initiative)	2.17	1.70	1.36	1.28	1.78
Var. 4 (Industry)	2.22	1.55	1.36	1.88	2.00
Var. 5 (Identity)	2.27	2.02	2.10	2.15	2.15
Var. 6 (Intimacy)	1.42	2.03	1.32	1.60	1.64

Table II. Discriminant Analysis Summary Table for Ego Identity Statuses

Step	Variable	df	F
1	Autonomy	1, 84	5.85[a]
2	Industry	1, 83	4.17[a]
3	Initiative	1, 82	1.27
4	Trust	1, 81	1.29
5	Intimacy	1, 80	0.88
6	Identity	1, 79	0.54

[a] $p < 0.05$.

minant function identified the Autonomy crisis stage as the most discriminating variable among the four identity statuses as evidenced by the F statistic of 5.85 ($p < 0.05$). The Industry crisis stage ($F = 4.17$) significantly contributed to the discriminating power of the discriminant function also at the 0.05 level of significance (see Table II).

The means and standard deviations for the male ego identity statuses are presented in Table III, and for the female statuses in Table IV. In relation to Hypothesis 2, the discriminant function did not identify any variables contributing to the discriminating power between either male and female achievement or moratorium statuses at the 0.05 level of significance. However, the discriminant function identified the Identity crisis stage as the most discriminating variable between male and female foreclosure statuses as evidenced by the F statistic of 5.66 ($p < 0.05$). The Industry crisis stage variable ($F = 3.65$) also significantly

Table III. Means and Standard Deviations for the Identified Male Statuses on the Six Variables

	Achievement ($N = 13$)	Moratorium ($N = 8$)	Foreclosure ($N = 6$)	Diffusion ($N = 8$)	Total ($N = 35$)
Means					
Var. 1 (Trust)	9.31	9.88	9.67	8.00	9.20
Var. 2 (Autonomy)	10.23	9.75	9.17	7.88	9.40
Var. 3 (Initiative)	8.92	8.88	10.50	9.00	9.20
Var. 4 (Industry)	7.69	9.25	10.17	7.00	8.31
Var. 5 (Identity)	8.46	8.38	9.83	7.88	8.54
Var. 6 (Intimacy)	9.85	10.00	9.66	8.88	9.63
Standard Deviations					
Var. 1 (Trust)	2.93	1.36	2.06	1.51	2.10
Var. 2 (Autonomy)	2.01	1.16	2.04	1.73	1.76
Var. 3 (Initiative)	2.40	1.80	1.76	1.07	1.85
Var. 4 (Industry)	2.50	1.67	1.94	1.93	2.08
Var. 5 (Identity)	2.22	1.92	2.56	1.87	2.13
Var. 6 (Intimacy)	1.21	1.60	1.37	0.83	1.24

Table IV. Means and Standard Deviations for the Identified Female Statuses on the Six Variables

		Achievement ($N = 24$)	Moratorium ($N = 13$)	Foreclosure ($N = 9$)	Diffusion ($N = 7$)	Total ($N = 53$)
Means						
Var. 1	(Trust)	9.42	10.23	9.00	9.86	9.61
Var. 2	(Autonomy)	9.67	10.31	9.00	8.29	9.53
Var. 3	(Initiative)	9.50	9.08	9.44	8.86	9.30
Var. 4	(Industry)	8.88	8.69	9.89	8.14	8.91
Var. 5	(Identity)	9.25	9.54	7.67	8.00	8.89
Var. 6	(Intimacy)	9.50	9.77	8.89	8.14	9.28
Standard Deviations						
Var. 1	(Trust)	1.82	1.09	0.87	1.57	1.45
Var. 2	(Autonomy)	1.88	1.11	0.87	1.50	1.47
Var. 3	(Initiative)	1.96	1.71	0.88	1.57	1.66
Var. 4	(Industry)	1.98	1.49	0.93	1.77	1.65
Var. 5	(Identity)	2.29	2.03	0.87	2.58	2.02
Var. 6	(Intimacy)	1.53	2.31	1.27	2.19	1.76

Table V. Discriminant Analysis Summary Table for Male and Female Foreclosure Statuses

Step	Variable	df	F
1	Identity	1, 13	5.66[a]
2	Initiative	1, 12	2.35
3	Trust	1, 11	1.23
4	Intimacy	1, 10	1.50
5	Autonomy	1, 9	0.03
6	Industry	1, 8	3.65[b]

[a] $p < 0.05$.
[b] $p < 0.10$.

Table VI. Discriminant Analysis Summary Table for Male and Female Diffusion Statuses

Step	Variable	df	F
1	Trust	1, 13	5.42[a]
2	Industry	1, 12	1.16
3	Autonomy	1, 11	1.00
4	Initiative	1, 10	0.26
5	Identity	1, 9	0.13
6	Intimacy	1, 8	0.37

[a] $p < 0.05$.

contributed to the discriminating power of the discriminant function at the 0.10 level of significance (see Table V).

The discriminant function also identified the Trust crisis stage as the most discriminating variable between male and female diffusion statuses as evidenced by the F statistic of 5.42 ($p < 0.05$) (see Table VI).

DISCUSSION

The major purpose of this study was to descriptively test the epigenetic principle of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. This suggests that the degree of success in resolving the identity crisis is systematically related to the degree of success in resolving previous crises. The results of Hypothesis 1 appeared to validate this relationship. This discriminant analysis of the psychosocial crisis resolution variables across all four identity statuses identified two of these as being able to significantly distinguish identity statuses from each other (see Table II).

The identification of the Autonomy crisis stage as being the most significant discriminating factor is supportive of Erikson's theory and other empirical studies. In his efforts to achieve a sense of self, the adolescent expands upon the basic sense of autonomy that he developed during the second childhood crisis (Erikson, 1968). The adolescent who has developed a sense of personal identity would possess a relatively high degree of autonomous behavior. In a similar manner, the adolescent who lacks of sense of self would likely indicate less autonomous behavior. The mean scores of the subjects on this variable (see Table I) tend to reveal a progressive decline from achievement toward diffusion status. This would appear to be suggestive of the expected relationship between this nuclear conflict and identity status.

C. K. Waterman *et al.* (1970) found that subjects characterized as relatively high in ego identity were significantly more internal on the Rotter (1966) I-E dimension than those who were developmental lower on the identity–identity diffusion continuum. They also found significant correlates between identity and autonomy. Gruen (1960) revealed a similar finding in which subjects with low identity accepted significantly more fake personality sketches than did high identity subjects. Marcia (1967) found foreclosure and diffusion subjects to be significantly more vulnerable to experimental manipulations of their self-esteem than identity achievement and moratorium groups. Rasmussen (1964) found that subjects presenting evidence of satisfactory ego identity also manifested a greater degree of self-acceptance than individuals presenting evidence of ego diffusion. Orlofsky *et al.* (1973) found that "alienated achievement" subjects scored high on need for autonomy. The findings in the present study seem congruent with other studies indicating a strong relationship between autonomous (e.g., self-directed, self-accepting) behavior and identity achievement.

The identification of the Industry crisis stage seems to be supportive of Erikson's theory. It is preferable that the youngster experience a kind of trial period to try out occupational related roles and responsibilities. The relationship between this apprenticeship period and the earlier childhood conflict of industry versus inferiority is readily apparent. It would seem that in deciding upon a vocational plan the adolescent would bear in mind the skills he acquired during this earlier period. In a similar manner, adolescents who see themselves as ill equipped may be unable to arouse interest or energy for either school or a job (Erikson, 1963, 1968). The mean scores of subjects on this variable (see Table I), as well as their respective verbalizations on the Occupational portion of the Ego Identity Status Interview, are suggestive of this phenomenon.

The mean scores of the achievement (8.46) and moratorium (8.90) subjects are indicative of a moderately high degree of industrious orientation. The diffusion subjects had the lowest score (7.53) of all statuses. This would seem supportive of Erikson's concept discussed in the above paragraph. Most interesting was the high score (10.00) of the foreclosure subjects, which would appear to imply that foreclosure subjects adhere assiduously to the academic and occupational skills that they have acquired. The source of these skills and occupational orientation would most likely be parental (Marcia, 1966). This would perhaps suggest that foreclosure is a rather stable status with occupational decision making being the predominant source of such identity stability. It can be further proposed that the achievement status is derived more from the other areas (e.g., political and religious) than occupational. The results suggest that autonomous behavior would likely be a crucial component for achievement statuses.

Since the identity statuses were originally developed and validated using only college males, several studies (Marcia and Friedman, 1970; Schenkel and Marcia, 1972; Toder and Marcia, 1973) have been conducted to operationally define ego identity statuses for women. The results of these and other studies have indicated significant differences in identity status across sex. Consequently, Hypothesis 2 was tested in the present study in an attempt to further examine these sex differences.

The results for achievement as well as moratorium male and female subjects indicated that none of the six variables could significantly distinguish ego identity status according to sex. These two identity statuses, with respect to sex, would seem to be formulated as a result of similar previous and concurrent components as they were operationally defined. However, the results of foreclosure and diffusion subjects indicated that male and female ego identity statuses could be significantly distinguished on the basis of these variables.

Discriminant function indicated that the Identity and the Industry crisis stages significantly contributed to the discriminant power between male and female foreclosure subjects (see Table V). Foreclosures, as defined by Marcia (1966), have acquired a sense of commitment to be a belief system and subsequently should reflect a greater degree of identity formation. However the mean

scores of the Identity variable (see Tables III and IV) seem to indicate that female foreclosures (7.67) do not reveal such identity stability as opposed to male foreclosures (9.83). This is contrary to the Toder and Marcia (1973) finding that female foreclosure is a stable and adaptive status. Although their status may be a more adaptive one, female foreclosure subjects seem not to be as certain of their ideologies as they would outwardly appear. In contrast to achievement females, foreclosure subjects – not having experienced actual "crisis" – would more readily adhere to parental ideologies and yet not feel as confident inwardly as those who have actually gone through "crisis." It can be concluded that the experience of "crisis" is an important element in the development of female ego identity.

The Industry variable was seem as a contributory, but not a sufficient, factor distinguishing male and female foreclosure subjects ($F = 3.65, p < 0.10$). Even though the mean scores were very similar, there was greater variability between male and female subjects (see Tables III and IV). Female scores may perhaps be more representative of a higher degree of industry. This was seen as only a speculative trend toward the adaptiveness of the foreclosure status for women (Marcia and Friedman, 1970; Schenkel, 1975; Schenkel and Marcia, 1972; Toder and Marcia, 1973). Constantinople (1969) found that the only area in which females seem to be more mature than males as seniors in college was that of industry. This was interpreted as a reasonable finding, since industry seemed to be an area both of less stress for women and an area of less significance in their future roles.

It would seem that in deciding upon a vocational plan, the adolescent would bear in mind the skills he has acquired during this earlier period. Since decisions related to occupation seem more crucial for male identity (Marcia, 1966, 1967), males may conceivably be more concerned and dubious about their vocational skills than females. This may explain the greater variability among Industry scores for males than for females, where the variable would play a lesser role in establishment of an identity.

The results for diffusion subjects indicated the Trust crisis stage as the only variable significantly contributing to the discriminant power between male and female diffusion statuses (see Table VI). The identification of this stage with diffusion subjects is consistent with other studies. Rasmussen (1964) initially found a relationship between this crisis stage and ego diffusion. Constantinople (1969) found longitudinal changes in basic trust and increase in successful resolution of identity. Donovan (1970) found that identity diffusion subjects had little trust in themselves or the world. Males had a lower mean score on this variable than female subjects, indicating a relatively lesser degree of basic trust (see Tables III and IV).

Review of the findings of this study appears to support the Eriksonian psychosocial theory of development. The evidence presented also has demonstrated additional convergent and discriminant validity of Marcia's ego identity status

concept. In light of these conclusions, the findings of this study seem to have generated the following implications for additional research:

1. The identity status of each individual section of the *Ego Identity Status Interview,* rather than the summary rating, should be examined. Many of the subject's ratings were "mixed" in that individual sections were rated differently than the summary rating. Classifying subjects according to these individual section ratings might allow for a more precise investigation of adolescent ego identity.

2. In view of the inherent limitations of self-report inventories, further study should focus more upon specific and objective behavioral measure. This would augment the validity of self-report data.

3. Sample size for the identity statuses should be increased to allow for the possibility of additional significant findings. This is particularly relevant for the foreclosure and diffusion statuses, in which a sample size of 15 was obtained for each. Implied here is the possibility that the small sample size may have contributed to the absence of some expected significant data.

4. Correlational matrices among the psychosocial variables should be evaluated in order to more concisely determine their significance to ego identity status.

5. Ego identity status studies should be expanded to include sampling from noneducational populations. The studies to date appear heavily skewed in this respect. Increased heterogeneity of adolescent sampling populations would offer the opportunity for greater external validity of the theoretical concept.

In order to do justice to the study of adolescent development, there is a need to do more intensive research. This requires studying more aspects of identity formation and finding new ways of measuring these phenomena. Furthermore, examination of the broad spectrum of adolescence appears to be a desirable goal. In this way research can continue to understand the full range of the adolescent experience and discover a basis for additional verification and revision of different aspects of the Eriksonian model.

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